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Text

And you can't take it and say, Oh, this area is sacred, this area is sacred, this area is sacred. Well, I'm going to go and mine here and here where it's not sacred. You know, they did that at Crow Butte.

Oh, we know it's sacred, we know that. And they didn't consult with us. Again, they went to the state, the state preservation officer of Nebraska. And don't detach yourself on that. That is the Environmental Protection Agency. Again, we keep reiterating that.

Our concerns include both surface and ground water. The Pine Ridge Reservation has a history of both ground water contamination and river contamination. We are currently threatened by an existing uranium mine to the south and by historical uranium mining and the Dewey-Burdock project to the north. The mine to the south, the Crow Butte ISL mine, has had 85 license violations and reportable incidents, including a leak that was not reported or stopped for over two years.

The EPA fails to acknowledge the dozens of violations and reportable incidents at just one in-situ leach mine, the Crow Butte Mine, or to talk realistically about the fact that excursions and leaks are normal for in-situ mines.

In fact, at least two ISL mines, excursions have reached outside the mine boundary.

You live in Denver. You're not going to feel any impacts. We know that our rivers all over South Dakota have been contaminated already by Edgemont and by Crow Butte. We're talking life or death.

To them it's nothing. And, yeah, they might care, but it's our future generations that is what's really important. You can look at the facts on Crow Butte, Nebraska, Cameco -- I think that's how you say it -- the company mining, was underreporting a lot of incidents.

Now it is threatened with the contamination from radio-active hazard material. I am opposed to fracking and mining of yellow cake uranium at Crow Butte, in Crawford, Nebraska that threatens our Oglala, Mnizila, Inyan Kara, etc. aquifers.

We need to stand up against this devastation. Uranium mining is not the way to go because Pine Ridge Reservation Oglala Sioux Tribe is being contaminated via aquifers under our home and down White River. Crow Butte Uranium is not trying to clean up anything because they are not responsible for any damages outside their mining area. We need the EPA to do their job, and protect people from contamination.

The water, once fouled by in situ Uranium Mining, cannot be made useable. All you have to do see an example of this is look about an hour's drive south from the area where these mines are proposed to the Crow Butte mine near Crawford, Nebraska.. In situ uranium mining there has left the Brule aquifer permanently contaminated.

The Cameco Uranium Mining Project in Crawford, NE called Crowe Butte is a case in point. After 23 years of mining and dumping contaminated water back into the aquifers, the water is now hopelessly polluted. Tests by the USGS reveal radiation, and arsenic many times the EPA standards. Crowe Butte was given a full exemption by the NRC, the EPA, and the State of Nebraska. Residents thought that the mine was "in compliance" not realizing the status of the exemptions. People there are experiencing high rates of cancer. Many are abandoning their homes and leaving the area. This should never happen.

-The Crow Butte Uranium Mine is a prime example of what can go wrong with uranium mining and STILL the mines continues to spew toxic radiation from its site with no immediate intention from the EPA or PowerTech to clean it up...

I know this is a lot of information. Thank you for taking the time. In closing, here are some violations in a neighboring ISL mine:

License Violations at Crow Butte ISL uranium mine (Nebraska)

- Aug 6, 2013: Well fails 15 year mechanical integrity test.
- Jun. 2011: Radiation Chose in unrestricted area exceeds 0.02 mSv/h standard
- Mar. 14, 2013: Evaporation Pond 1 liner leak
- Jan. 18, 2013: Well fails mechanical integrity test
- Oct. 24, 2012: Well fails 20-year mechanical integrity test
- Aug. 20, 2012: Well fails 5-year mechanical integrity test
- June 4, 2012: Well fails 5-year mechanical integrity test

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- May 25, 2012: Monitor well fails 15-year mechanical integrity test
- Oct. 7, 2011: Monitor well excursion
- Aug. 9, 2011: Exceedance of Well Head Manifold Pressure Limitations
- July 18, 2011: two wells fail 5-year mechanical integrity test
- June 1, 2011: Evaporation Pond 1 liner leak
- May 27, 2011: two Monitor well excursions
- May 24, 2011: Monitor well excursion
- Mar. 16, 2011: Monitor well excursion
- Jan. 13, 2011: Monitor well excursion
- July 8, 2010: Monitor well excursion
- July 6, 2010: Well fails 5-year mechanical integrity test
- June 22, 2010: Excursions at two monitor wells "due to increased groundwater levels"
- June 22, 2010: Monitor well excursion
- June 16, 2010: Excursions at three monitor wells "due to increased groundwater levels"
- June 11, 2010: Evaporation Pond 3 liner leak detected
- May 10, 2010: Well fails 5-year mechanical integrity test
- Apr. 13, 2010: Excursion at monitor well due to "natural conditions"
- Dec. 31, 2009: Evaporation Pond 4 Liner Leak
- Nov. 19, 2009: Well fails 15-year mechanical integrity test
- Oct. 15, 2009: Mechanical integrity test missed for two wells
- June 18, 2009: Evaporation Pond 4 liner leak detected
- June 11, 2009: Monitor well excursion
- June 5, 2009: Evaporation Pond 1 liner leak detected
- April 27, 2009: Monitor well placed on excursion status
- April 17, 2009: Production well fails 5-year mechanical integrity test
- June 4, 2008: Exceedance of Well Head Manifold Pressure Limitations
- May 31, 2008: Monitor well placed on excursion status
- May 23, 2008: \$50,000 penalty imposed for violations.
- May 19, 2008: Monitor well placed on excursion status
- April 29, 2008: Five-year mechanical integrity test missed for 42 wells
- September 26, 2006: Monitor well placed on excursion status
- May 5, 2006: leak detected at Pond 4
- January 19, 2006: Monitor well placed on excursion status
- October 27, 2005: Injection well leak detected
- August 4, 2005: Monitor well placed on excursion status
- June 28, 2005: Monitor well placed on excursion status
- June 17, 2005: Monitor well placed on excursion status
- May 2, 2005: Monitor well placed on excursion status
- May 14, 2004: leak detected at Pond 1
- December 23, 2003: Monitor well placed on excursion status
- December 26, 2002: Monitor well placed on excursion status
- September 10, 2002: Monitor well placed on excursion status
- April 4, 2002: Monitor well placed on excursion status
- December 4, 2001: Monitor well placed on excursion status
- March 2, 2001: Monitor well placed on excursion status
- September 10, 2000: Monitor well placed on excursion status
- May 26, 2000: Monitor well placed on excursion status

- April 27, 2000: Monitor well placed on excursion status
- March 6, 2000: Monitor well placed on excursion status
- July 2, 1999: Monitor well placed on excursion status
- August 7, 1998: Spill of 10,260 gallons of injection fluid
- March 21, 1998: Monitor well placed on excursion status
- August 12, 1997: Discovery of Pinhole Leaks in Upper Liner of Process Water Evaporation Pond

Source: <http://www.wise-uranium.org/umopusa.html#CROWB>

Remember, if the permits are granted, due to state legislation removed in 2011, the DENR will no longer have the authority to do anything regarding ISL mining - no bonds, oversight, or penalties for license violations.

My name is [Ex. 6 Personal Privacy (PP)], please accept these as my comments to the formal hearing record.

I am a Sioux County Nebraska resident, our home is located about the same distance from the headwaters of the White River as we are from Cameco's CBR in-situ leach uranium mining and milling operation at Crawford, NE.

In 2012 I returned to northwest Nebraska where I was born and raised after living in the Black Hills of South Dakota for 26 years. What little I heard about the Crow Butte yellowcake operation was mostly public relations fluff. In 2004 and 2005 I spent a lot of time in Crawford caring for my terminally ill Mother. Mom was a resident of the Crawford area since the early 1940s, she was diagnosed with lung cancer in 2004 and died in Crawford nine months later. During that time period one of the many Crow Butte Resources' documented violations was an undetected poisonous spill into an underground source of drinking water that lasted for 2 1/2 years spanning from July 1, 2003 through March 31, 2006.

Crawford residents die early in their lives and many assume the mine is causing cancer. Residents have tested positive for heavy metals contamination associated with ISL operations, their recovery is dependent on their leaving the area of contamination. Residents fish nearby ponds and the White River at Crawford, but they do not eat their catch. It is rumored that a farmer had to down crops in their field due to contamination from the adjacent ISL license area. My Uncle, also a long time resident of Crawford, has stopped drinking his tap water. Workers say that one of the 8000 CBR wells has been sealed with railroad ties, and it is rumored that one of deep disposal wells has failed. Crawford, in Dawes County, has 2 of Nebraska's three deepest toxic waste disposal wells.

Locally the only critical thought and formal push back against the uranium mine has been from the Oglala Sioux Tribe and Consolidated Intervener expert witnesses. Elected officials, economic elites and growth groups worry about real estate values and their investments. The uranium mine and yellowcake mill is left off travel publications and maps. It feels like a cover-up. How do you invite people to visit and/or live in a radioactive contaminated area? Informed consent is vital to ethical human population care and development, otherwise, is it not "human trafficking" to invite uninformed people to get sick?

Up north near the South Dakota border some people are saying they want the economic advantages uranium mining & milling proponents boost about. The economically advantaged up there must be talking about tax relief or school funding because Crawford is dilapidating. The water works infrastructure is giving way and costly repairs are undertaken to keep the city water system functioning for a high poverty and declining population due to health and economic evacuation. It is heartbreaking for me when I think that short sighted land managers and property owners tied our schools to an unlicensed nuclear waste dump and future superfund site.

For example, the Crow Butte ISL mine near Crawford, NE., has had 85 license violations and reportable incidents. These range from excursions to leaks and spills to wells failing integrity tests. One leak at this site was not found or dealt with for over two years, which makes a mockery of the EPA's great faith in gauges, sensors, alarms, and other hardware to identify leaks and related system problems.

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I am a Sioux County, Nebraska resident. Our home is located about the same distance from the headwaters of the White River as we are from the Cameco's Crow Butte Resources in-situ leach uranium mine and milling operation at Crawford, Nebraska.

In 2012, I returned to northwest Nebraska where I was born and raised after living in the Black Hills of South Dakota for 26 years. What little I've heard about Crow Butte yellowcake operation was mostly public relations fluff.

In 20- in -- in 2004 and 2005, I spent a lot of time in Crawford caring for my terminally ill mother. Mom was a resident of Crawford area since the early 1940s. She was diagnosed with lung cancer in 2004, and died in Crawford nine months later.

During that time period, one of the many Crow Butte Resources documented violations was an undetected poisonous spill into an underground source of drinking water that lasted for two and a half years, spanning from July 1, 2003 to March 31, 2006.

Crawford residents die early in their lives, and many assume the mine is causing cancer. Residents have tested positive for heavy metals contamination associated with ISL operations. Their recovery is dependent on their leaving the area of contamination.

Residents fish nearby ponds and the White River at Crawford, but they do not eat their catch. It is rumored that a farmer had to down crops in their field due to contamination from an adjacent ISL license area. My uncle, also a long-time resident of Crawford, has stopped drinking his tap water.

Workers say that one of the 8,000 CBR wells has been sealed with railroad ties, and it is rumored that one of the deep disposal wells has failed. Crawford and Dawes County have two of Nebraska's deepest toxic waste disposal wells.

Locally, the only critical thought and formal pushback against the uranium mine has been the Oglala Sioux Tribe and consolidated intervenors. Expert witnesses, elected officials, economic elites, and growth groups worry about real estate values and their investments. The uranium mine and the yellowcake mill is left off travel publications and maps. It feels like a cover-up.

I live ten miles from the Crow Butte in-situ leach mine, which I believe was originally given a 20-year lease.

Then they get a 10-year temporary lease.

They've had plenty of time to try to clean that aquifer back up, and I don't believe it has been done or there is any intention of it being done.

So I don't even know why you would even come around. That's crazy. Well, look at what you did to Crow Butte, though. Crow Butte is crazy, right? Went to a Nebraska preservation officer for our cultural relevance on a temporary permit for ten years. Are you crazy?

And when you look at Crow Butte's list of excursions and they -- there's a probably, like, a 20-year history of five-year well -- well -- you know, where they're not up to their five-year code. And they keep doing that, but they're still on this temporary license. That's crazy.

The other factor is when we go -- when these parts, there's a big reservoir, Angostura, which is already highly contaminated from the Crow Butte uranium mine, which goes into the other watersheds.

So I just wanted to site the Crow Butte mine in nearby Nebraska as an example of types of violations that do occur at ISL sites. Between August 12, 1997 and August 6, 2013, there were 59 violations. I'm not sure if they were EPA violations or state-regulated violations, but ranging from radiation dose in unrestricted area, liner leaks in ponds, well -- mechanical integrity failing in their wells, 20-year mechanical integrity test fail, 5-year fail, 15-year fail, exceedance of wellhead manifold pressure limitations, just a variety of things. They were fined for many of them.

We know that Cameco's operations in Crow Butte, Nebraska have negatively impacted the water on Pine Ridge.

This came out in expert testimony both on the matter of license renewal for Crow Butte as well as the hearings for the NRC permit for this proposed project.

Ex. 6 Personal Privacy (PP) n you hear me? Okay.

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Greetings, Mitakuyepi. Greetings to you of the Environmental Protection Agency of the United States of America. My name is [Ex. 6 Personal Privacy (PP)]. My Lakota name is [Ex. 6 Personal Privacy (PP)]. I'm Oglala Lakota from the Pine Ridge homelands, maybe 60 miles south of here. And I am Cheyenne on my mother's side, Northern Cheyenne, who escaped from prisoner of war status at Crawford, Nebraska back in the day.

Now, I'm familiar with Crawford, Nebraska because that's where there's an in-situ leach uranium mine owned by Cameco Incorporated. I'm the lead plaintiff against that corporation.

They want to renew their license and start a new mine, North Trend; a new mine, Three Crow; a new mine, Marsland. One of the men who used to work for Cameco at Crow Butte, he's part of Powertech and Azarga.

I don't trust these uranium corporations because I've been in this battle for the protection of sacred water for 27 years now. When we filed against Cameco, we were the first ones to challenge a uranium corporation in America in 17 years. That was ten years ago. It's been 27 years now since anybody challenged a uranium corporation.

Count on hazardous delivery spills occurring on your county roads. Be ready to evacuate your home when it does. If you doubt it, come to Crawford. I'll give you a tour. The casual transport of yellowcake is lethal to wayside communities. Boreholes and toxic flush extraction and mining yellowcake endangers downstream communities far into the future.

Don't let Cameco bring hazardous poisonous waste up here. Don't do your neighbor like that.

[Ex. 6 Personal Privacy (PP)] My name is [Ex. 6 Personal Privacy (PP)]. I'm from Sioux County, born and raised in Crawford, Nebraska where

Crow Butte is at. And I just wanted to -- to state about the fact that we aren't welcome here and we're intruding on this community, and those kind of things.

And I just want to say that I trusted my town leadership as well. I trusted what was going on in my hometown.

During the time period -- my mom was a resident of Crawford area since the early '40s. She came from Oglala. She came to Crawford because there was jobs there.

There's an Indian camp on the White River there, and we still would like it surveyed and reach into that history of the people who belonged to this land in this area. And we're going to do that. And we're going to -- we're going to talk about Squaw Creek Road that runs by Cameco.

But Mom was a resident of Crawford. She was diagnosed with lung cancer in 2004, and died in Crawford nine months later. During that time period, one of the many Crow Butte Resources documented violations was an undetected poisonous spill into an underground source of drinking water that lasted for two and a half years, spanning from July 1, 2003 through March 31, 2006.

My community, since the Oglala Sioux Tribe and the consolidated intervenors has interrupted that mine permitting, something happened. My community became encased in racism and hate.

My people said that Oglala were trying to take their jobs. My people criminalized poverty on each other and Oglala. Something happened. That is not who we are. Don't become that. Don't let your kids become that because you want tax relief and school funding and money for your elites. Don't sell out to a federal agency.

[...]

[Ex. 6 Personal Privacy (PP)] And talk about private property --

-- rights. Thank you.

Well, I was at another hearing, a hearing down in Crow Butte, and they were talking about restoring -- by the way, Crow Butte operated for at least five years without a permit because it had expired, and it took the NRC -- they continued to operate it and it took the NRC five years to get the hearing together to issue another permit.

[...]

-- there was a leak, this safe in-situ leach process with all the detection wells, there are 125 million gallons of -- of the toxic waste down at Crow Butte that leaked, and none of their detection wells got it. And it leaked.

There was a pin hole in one of their pipes. It leaked for years.

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So when we have, like, all this statistics showing and then also evidence of Crow Butte and what happened there, and how the uranium mine is still not cleared up, and you left a mess there, where it's contaminating that water in the earth. I mean, you have the facts showing. So the only other thing I can think of other than, you know, ignorance or, you know, greed is racism at its finest.

You know, and we learned a lot from Crow Butte. They won't clean up their -- out of the their area of mining site, and neither will you.

Ex. 6 Personal Privacy (PP) S: Hello. I'm Ex. 6 Personal Privacy (PP) I'm from Oglala, South Dakota. And I just want to put this sign up and let everybody look at this. And it says: Crow Butte uranium is evidence, is the proof of what can go wrong.

And we stand on this. Right now we live -- the White River goes by the Crow Butte uranium mine and, you know, we keep -- we keep -- we're debating over scientific and --
[...]

And how do you -- how do you have a program in-situ leach recovery program with these guidelines, and you're a federal agency, and your -- your chain of command is higher than the state. And how are you not going to regulate or look at Crow Butte?

And you know what, they -- I went to these NRC hearings. And you know what they said in there? They have a monitor system. Go back through the record, they have a monitor system.

They have from the beginning, failures upon failures. And I sat in that courtroom and they said, For sure way that we have a monitor system is the snow. The snow melts and let's us know that we have a leak because our monitor systems are failing.

And do they tell us that? No, they don't tell us that. You know, we live down on the reservation, and you have to really look at this and they are sitting up right here in front of our reservations. They don't want us here. They want us gone so they can keep profiting off our sacred Black Hills. So they are on purposely doing this.

I also ask that you take into consideration everything that has been happening within our world. Hanford, Washington, is the same time as during your hearings. That's direct evidence. Crow Butte is direct evidence. This is within our land, our territory, where we, me and my people, have been here for thousands and thousands of years.